IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A virtual stored data management system[[;]] , the virtual stored data management system comprising:

one or more hosts;

a plurality of data storage elements functionally coupled to the one or more hosts, wherein the plurality of data storage elements include a host network attachment, a data transfer system, at least one of a storage server and a controller, and a permanent data storage media, wherein the permanent data storage media is organized with management information uniquely associated with units of data such that the management information may be manipulated at a plurality of nodes that are in [[several]] a plurality of different locations within the virtual stored data management system substantially simultaneously; and

virtualization means for converting a storage request to a virtual volume into a storage request to at least one data storage element of said plurality of data storage elements.

2. (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the data comprises allowing an internal process to discover a current location of a data processing function.

3. (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the management information comprises allowing the location of the manipulation of said management information to be changed as directed by a host.

4.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the management information comprises allowing the location of the manipulation of said management information to be changed as directed by internal process.

5.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the management information comprises allowing the location of the manipulation of said management information to be replicated as directed by a host.

6.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the management information comprises allowing the location of the manipulation of said management information to be replicated as directed by internal process.

7.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein manipulation of the management information comprises allowing for processing of the management information to be held consistent when completed in more than one place substantially simultaneously.

8.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least part of the management information manipulation is performed at a node <u>of said plurality of nodes that is located</u> in a connecting network.

9.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least part of the management information manipulation is performed at a node <u>of said plurality of nodes that is located</u> in a storage server.

10.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least part of the management information manipulation is performed at a node <u>of said plurality of nodes that is located</u> in a storage controller.

11.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least part of the management information manipulation is performed at a node of said plurality of nodes that is located in a storage element.

12.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least part of the management information associated with units of data is stored at a node of said plurality of nodes that is located in the permanent data storage media.

13.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 12, wherein the permanent data storage media includes robotically controlled removable media.

14.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 12, wherein the permanent data storage media includes a newly acquired removable media.

15.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
        discovery means for discovering one or more of the plurality of data storage elements.

16.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 15, wherein the discovery means work in parallel with management information processing.

17.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, wherein the manipulation of the management information comprises a change of location.

18.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 17, wherein the change of location includes a promotion toward a using host.

19.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 17, wherein the change of location includes a demotion further from a using host

20.   (Currently amended) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

simultaneous processing of the management information at different layers of [[The]] the virtual stored data management system.

21.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

simultaneous processing of the management information at different units at the same layer of the virtual stored data management system.

22.   (Original) The virtual stored data management system as recited in claim 21, further comprising:

simultaneous processing of the management information at different layers and different units of the virtual stored data management system.

23.   (Canceled)